

iARTistas

CULTURE | ART | INTERVIEWS | POETRY | EXHIBITIONS | POSTCARD SUBSCRIPTIONS | CHICAGO



Front Cover of Rock Legends Doodle Art by Ivonne Bess. Available as a postcard subscription.

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Four Walls

Look, this is how it happens:
In a room.
Four walls and a floor.
High ceiling, windows
that allow too much light
in the morning.
A room is a room is
(usually) a room,
but this is the room
where you first learned to love
the light and take it in
like music.
This is the room
you first opened to him
with the tremor of a promise
that yearns to be broken.
If this room were a river
it would move swift and dangerous,
twisting over stones like
a knotted snake.
If this room were a fall,
it would be a long one
you would fight all the way down,
refusing to embrace the inevitable
even as the earth reached up
to snatch you.

Sissy

Up the hill, up the hill.
Snow falls heavy as a body. You clamber over
and through it, a jar of teeth in one hand, a
book you will never read in the other. Thinking
that some people can sleep through anything.

Up the hill, up the hill.
You remember his body in the cold morning
light, quaking like a fault line stretching along
the length of you. How the men working across
the street pretended they weren't watching.

Up the hill, up the hill.
This is the future you maybe didn't ask for.
Another cold day, another unread book. You
were learning how wars are fought. Quietly,
mostly alone. Somewhere out of the way.

Up the hill, up the hill.
This is what is left: the memory sprouting up,
a familiar threat knocked toothless. A million
bodies falling like snowflakes that will never
melt on your tongue, all the names you can
never say that will.

Justin Bond's work has appeared most recently in The Doctor T.J. Eckleburg Review, OCHO: A Journal of Queer Arts, and Heavy Feather Review. His chapbook, Going Native, is available from Red Bird Chapbooks. A contributing editor for The Found Poetry Review, he lives and works in Tulsa.





The Finish Off

After the white coats went their merry way,
I decided to kill Cerberus myself. He growled
as I drew near, unveiling those ivory teeth.
I bit down hard on my chewing gum,
and sprayed fragrant oil onto each foaming head
of the dusty gray dog. The scent soured his noses,
and he dropped his heads and tucked in his tail.

Then I pulled out the Eau de Légumes Pourris
and threw it in his faces. He stepped back
and yelped, fur turning blood red,
so I spit my gum onto one of his snouts,
laughed at his grand ol' cinnamon mole.

Finally, I drenched him with the extra oxygen
that surrounded me. His heads shrunk
like bubble gum bubbles losing air. His red fur
went as pale as those old white coats,
and the three-headed dog turned so sterile
it seemed he had taken off, tail clenching belly,
at the utter agony of joy.

ART GABRIELA DELLOSSO

New Jersey based artist, Gabriela Gonzalez Dellosso received her BFA from The School of Visual Arts in Manhattan. Her work can be found in many notable private and museum collections. Her work has been published in The New York Times, Fine Art Connoisseur, Artnews and many others. She is represented by the Harmon-Meek Gallery in Naples, Florida. Gabriela teaches painting and drawing at the National Academy School of Fine Arts, NYC and the JCC of Manhattan. Website: www.gabrieladellosso.com

Opposite Page
The Milliner's Shop
oil on canvas
32x40

Below
Beatrice Reading (Homage to Dante)
oil on canvas
36x50

All art sizes in iARTistas are inches unless otherwise stated.





What social issue do you care most about and how do you express that in your art?

I am very passionate about my ongoing homage series, dedicated to historical women painters. I am creating paintings to bring much needed attention to the subject. I am tired of seeing museum exhibitions excluding the women painters. People need to know, that there were many excellent, innovative women practicing art throughout the ages.

If someone told you that you could only make one more painting for the rest of your life, what would do imagine you would paint?

It would probably have an angel or clown in it. Perhaps it would be a mural in a church or museum. Definitely something with multiple figures in it. It would definitely be narrative.

If you could collaborate with any artist, who would it be and why?

Salvador Dali, because his paintings are magic and I love them. HE was GREAT art. He painted many subjects, and delivered a very personal stamp on his work, his unmistakable point of view. I love his crazy, yet universal world.

Are you getting tired of nudes? It depends on who is painting or drawing the nude. What are they bringing to the table beside technique? I love William Adolphe Bouguereau and Egon Schiele, it is not the technique that they have in common in their nudes, but the "X" factor which you can't put your finger on.

Do you collect art yourself and if so, what artwork do you collect? Surrealism.

Are you a feminist? I would not define

myself as a feminist, although I may fit the definition. My world, my point of view is feminine, so the work is derived from that point of view. My subject matter is very varied, I will paint clowns, or brides, and anything that I may find interesting. I feel that my love of poetry, perhaps is my biggest influence.

What are your thoughts about the current publishing media of the arts? I think that the internet is a major revolutionary vehicle, so magazine/book publishers, who utilize it successfully will reach wider audiences, than just the paper formats. I don't think that anything will ever replace holding a book or magazine in your hand, but if it is a book or magazine in paper format, it has to be top notch.

What is your favorite poem? *Romance Sonambulo* by Federico Garcia Lorca

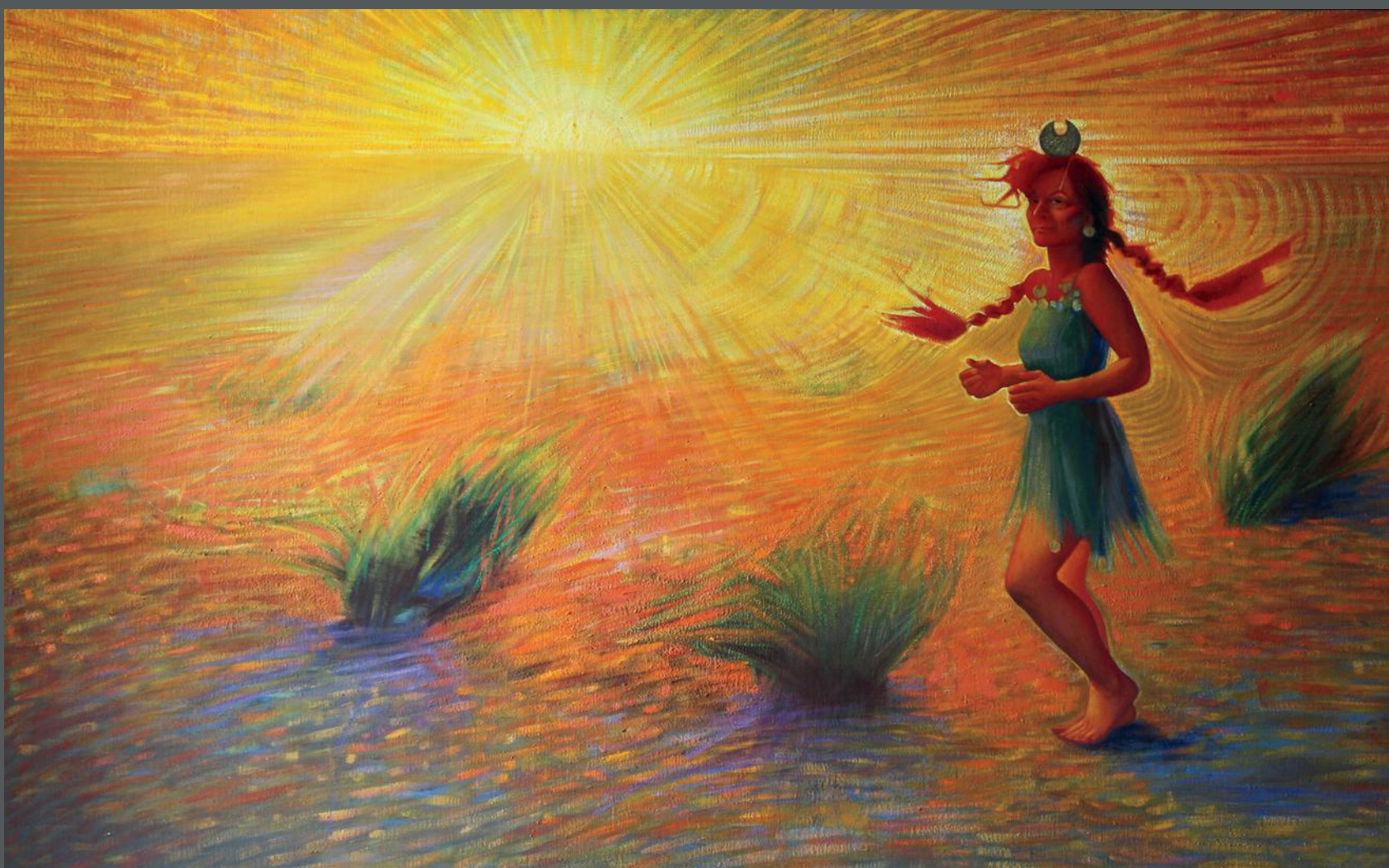
ART NICOLE ALGER



Top Page
Balance
oil on panel
7x10

Right
Come
oil on canvas
36x60

Opposite Page
Bones
oil on panel
14x34





Nicole Alger is a trained classical realist painter whose work ranges from the imaginatively figurative, with abstract elements and high chroma paint, to the more subdued palette of traditional realism. The imaginative work is influenced loosely by indigenous, animist spirituality. The most recent group show that included her figurative work was at First Street Gallery in New York City. A solo show of her traditional landscapes and still lifes is scheduled for Nov. 2016 in Norfolk, CT.

Who is your favorite living artist and why? I do not have a favorite, but I admire Daniel Sprick for his mad skills with the flesh and objects. His understanding of how to evoke beauty and wonder with his brush is unparalleled. Trying to explain 'why' has everything to do with his 'how'. For me, at least.

Are you getting tired of nudes? Yes. I have felt for years that the default for representational painters of single figured, semi naked young women has become old. I understand that painters, myself included, love the process of painting, and what's not to like about wanting to

paint female beauty? That said, it behooves us all to search for a richer way to express the form. I admire and am moved by beautifully crafted work, but I respond to a painter who uses the figure to express something more. To me, the ideal work has a meaningful message in addition to being formally beautiful, and I mean beautifully made, not necessarily of beautiful people. There are many painters today who are successful at expressing more with the figure.

Do you collect art yourself and if so, what artwork do you collect? I buy work that is on the small side, usually

looser in execution, though I bought a highly finished self portrait by Kamille Corry. I am open to being moved and I act quickly and spontaneously. I enjoy buying all genres of paintings, from portraits, to still lifes, and landscapes. I will buy anything that strikes me as beautiful and excellent.

What has been your biggest obstacle as an artist? Self confidence.

What is your favorite color? Periwinkle. But then, this is a trick question, since of course we love most colors in context!



ART HEATHER HORTON



Heather Horton was born and raised in Burlington, Ontario, Canada. She attended McMaster University where she received a Bachelor of Arts in English Literature. She then went on to graduate from the well-respected Interpretive Illustration program at Sheridan College. She has pursued her passion for painting ever since. Recently Heather's painting "Hannah, Osmosis" was selected from over 2,200 submissions from around the world to be a part of Collective Arts Brewing's Series Four beer labels. Her work may be found in private and corporate collections in Canada, The United States, Germany, New Zealand and England. A selection of her paintings is a part of the permanent art collection at the Canadian Embassy in Ankara, Turkey. Heather has been profiled by Bravo! Canada on a series called The Artist's Life. She is represented by Abbozzo Gallery in Toronto, Ontario. Visit heatherhorton.com



Hawkins Street Portrait
oil on panel
6x6

Arethusa
oil on panel
24x36

Self-Portrait, Rilke (cropped detail)
oil on panel
6x6

Let's talk about process. Do you one in place when it comes to creating your work? I paint seven days a week if I can. Daytime painting. I rarely paint at night. I am good at work/life balance and thus all painting happens during daylight hours 99% of the time.

My system for painting begins with a general idea for a piece. It may be a person or a place but usually a person as my prime focus is figurative. I do a photo shoot with my model/muse and then work from a variety of photos from that shoot to develop the painting. I draw a sketch of the composition first and then move in with the paint. I work in a series of layers and do not blend too much on the canvas typically. I use oil exclusively these days...oil on panel, usually as I like the rigidity of the panel versus the weave and texture of a canvas. I usually work on 2 paintings at once to let

one get tacky enough for another layer. While working I listen to movies that I know well so I am not distracted by the screen. I rarely listen to music as it makes me too emotional and may detract from my focus on the pieces...

You brought up not having any outside influences detract you from your focus. Have you ever thought to maybe trying to let an outside influence such as music control a whole work? What would be wrong with this? I think that in theory your idea about music is a good one, and it would be fun to see what happens, but I am very happy with how my routine and practice of work goes...it is a smooth structure which makes me happy and peaceful...music is a wonderful thing for sure but it would distract me too much and thus I listen to things that I know well other than music such as favourite films. But as a specific

project to try, to let the music dictate the work, it is a viable idea!

Tell us a little about the art scene where you live. I recently moved back from The Yukon Territory (next to Alaska). The art scene up there in Whitehorse was small but vibrant...The Yukon is a very large area space wise but the people are few so we found a lot of solidarity and support for one another there. Now that I am back in Ontario I live near Toronto but in the suburbs. The art scene in Toronto is huge whereas the city where I live is quieter and smaller but there is still a lot that goes on...honestly though if I want to go and see what is happening in galleries and art shows invariably I head to Toronto. The Art Dealers Association of Canada is a wonderful organization which my gallery representative, Abbozzo Gallery in downtown Toronto, is a part of.



JULIE MARIE WADE

POETRY



Julie Marie Wade is the author of four collections of poetry and four collections of prose, including the forthcoming *CATECHISM: A LOVE STORY* (Noctuary Press, 2016) and *SIX: POEMS* (Red Hen Press, 2016). She teaches in the creative writing program at Florida International University and lives with her spouse, Angie Griffin, on Hollywood Beach.

What social issue do you care most about and how do you express that in your art?

I've always thought of myself as a writer who engages with the big questions surrounding love, human relationships, and mortality, but more and more I've come to realize that I approach these questions through a distinctly feminist lens. I identify strongly with the feminist third wave. While working toward my MFA in poetry, I was simultaneously completing a graduate certificate in women's studies at the University of Pittsburgh, which led to my first job post-MFA—teaching Introduction to Women's Studies at Carlow University. Initially, I thought of what I taught and what I wrote as separate investments of my emotional and intellectual energy, but soon enough, I realized just how dynamic the relationship between the two actually was. In my poetry and prose, I am practicing what feminist Catherine MacKinnon calls “socially lived theorizing,” using personal experience to illustrate and investigate what would otherwise remain purely theoretical. I am especially committed to ideals of gender justice, in both teaching and writing, which means challenging gender stereotypes and heteronormativity at every turn. In my own writing, I strive

to examine and thwart presumed heterosexuality at all costs, given how difficult it was for me to come out as a lesbian in my early adulthood against the backdrop of my family's expectations and conservative Christianity's prescriptions for the life of a “good woman.” I challenge presumed heterosexuality most explicitly in my most recent poetry collection, *When I Was Straight* (A Midsummer Night's Press, 2014), but I am always working against such narrow dictates for women's lives. From 2009-2012, I was lucky enough to teach an upper-level, interdisciplinary course called “Humanities Perspectives on Sex Roles in Society” at the University of Louisville, where I was granted the freedom to develop the course any way I chose. To demonstrate the many ways other feminists have practiced socially lived theorizing and influenced my own understanding of feminism, I taught *Brutal Imagination* by Cornelius Eady, *Kinky* by Denise Duhamel, *love poem to androgyny* by Stacey Waite, and *The Black Notebooks: An Interior Journey* by Toi Derricotte. Teaching these cherished texts only further revealed to me that challenging patriarchy also means confronting racism and classism and others pernicious -isms that are deeply

and inevitably imbricated with misogyny and homophobia in our culture.

What is your favorite poem? There are too many to name, of course, but one of the first poems I remember really speaking to me — as if the poet herself was reaching out of the page and lifting me up by my collar, calling me to a deep and urgent attention — was “In Mind” by Denise Levertov. I read that poem my senior year of high school, not realizing that Denise Levertov was a living poet, having no idea that she lived in Seattle, just as I did — that she was going to die later that year and that I was going to begin to read her work avidly in college. The poem illustrates the binary experience that women often face, pulled between the allure of their interior and artistic lives and their social responsibilities to others. In the speaker's mind, there are two women — one has “no imagination” and the other “is not kind.” How to reconcile them? A life of literary and pedagogical activism might be one way! Or so I hope and choose to believe.

What poem do you want to be remembered by? From my own work? Oh, that's a toughie. Being remembered at all would

be nice! I have a collection of long poems called *SIX* that is coming out with Red Hen Press in Fall 2016. I wrote this book back in my Pittsburgh days, around 2006-2007, and the manuscript circulated for eight years before it found a literary home. Recently, I re-read the book as I was preparing it for final submission to the press, and I was struck by how poignant the poems were and how relevant they remained in terms of the resident questions I grapple with in my life. The final poem in the book is called “Next.” It does not exist in print or on the web yet. I think of that poem as a basket I have woven with language, in which I have placed some of my greatest vulnerabilities — the desire to belong in this world as a woman and as a lesbian; the desire to have the same-sex partnership at the center of my life (since the time of writing, the same-sex marriage at the center of my life) recognized and acknowledged by others; the desire not to be tolerated or cared for **in spite of** these most deeply felt truths about myself; and the desire not to turn suspicious or bitter toward those whose judgments I fear. So if I had to choose, I guess I would choose “Next.” The poem ends with a question, but it’s put forth as a statement: “What to make of our incalculable days.” I think this is my credo, and behind it, as with every assertion I make, there is a lingering inquiry, too.

What word have you not used in a poem yet? Wow! What a fantastic, unexpected question. I suppose the answer would

have to be a word I’ve just recently learned, since most every part of my lexicon is scoured in the making of poems. Today I learned the word misophonia from a *Slate* article. The word literally means “hatred of sound” and applies to those with a rarely diagnosed condition who are adversely affected — emotionally and even physically — by noises like chewing, smacking of gum or lips, chomping, slurping, gulping, etc. As I think about this word, I realize that it really belongs in a poem, given what a strong juxtaposition misophonia creates with the conception of poetry as an aural art. I’ve been working on a series of poems as “psalms in the spirit” of other things—people, places, cultural phenomena, etc. I’ve written a “Psalm in the Spirit of Drogenet” (the classic TV show starring Jack Webb and Harry Morgan), a “Psalm in the Spirit of Overstock.com,” a “Psalm in the Spirit of Amnesia,” “Psalm in the Spirit of the Bold Look of Kohler,” and so forth. It seems I need to write a “Psalm in the Spirit of Misophonia” now.

Explain your process. I don’t have one consistent process for writing poems or prose, but I do work in series a lot. In my first chapbook, *Without*, I came into a pattern of writing poems that engaged with different social roles or occupations — almost as a kind of persona exercise. After I had written “The Cartographer,” accessing the language and images of mapmaking, I wrote “The Understudy,” accessing the language and images of theater, and then “The Generalist,” thinking in a very meta

way about poets as generalists rather than specialists, students of the language and culture at large. In my first full-length collection, *Postage Due*, the title of the book itself provided the concept, which in turn assisted with the process. I knew the book was going to engage the epistolary impulse, so I recreated fan letters to Mary Tyler Moore that I had written and letters to people from my past to whom I wished I had written but never did. In high school, my English teacher Mrs. Kaz encouraged us to engage with the books we were reading in unconventional ways, so I wrote letters to Arthur Dimmesdale and Hester Prynne from *The Scarlet Letter* and to Mick Kelly from *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*. I revisited those characters again in my collection in a series of persona poems. The first half of *When I Was Straight* is comprised entirely of poems that bear this title. I thought of the process as a kaleidoscope, turning and turning the lens to examine my heteronormative youth through different memories and via different analogies. In the second half of the book, I used coming out as a rhetorical frame and drew from Stacey Waite’s series of “When” poems in the brilliant collection, *the lake has no saint*. I made my own “when” poems into examples of the coming-out process, which often feels interminable: “When ____ Learns I am a Lesbian” allowed me to recreate many charged — and sometimes absurdly funny — scenes from my life **after** the veil of presumed heterosexuality had been lifted.

When I Was Straight

Everything came to me vicariously—a promise,
a post-script, a preview of coming attractions.

Desire a quiet rumor that rippled through the halls.

At the cinema, someone always paid for popcorn, a soda
with two straws, little licorice candies.

I loved to sit in the back row & watch
till all the credits rolled.

“You have a gift,” the blond boy said, “for stalling.”

Later, in a twin bed in a college dorm, I spoke without thinking—
“I like you. Let’s get this over with.”

His pink mouth amazed, so wide & round.
“Did you hear what you just said?” he asked.

I hadn’t been listening.



Donna Bliss has been with the Zhou B Art Center since 2009 as the Event Director. Since then she has been instrumental in creating a thriving event venue, hosting some of the premier events in Chicago. In May of 2014 she was promoted to Vice President of Creative Development to handle public relations, marketing, and all creative aspects of the center. In addition, she will work directly with the Zhou Brothers as they expand their business to other cities. With her BFA from the Art Institute of Chicago, she has come back to her roots and has exhibited pieces in several shows at the center.

Audience attending Third Friday at Zhou B Art Center, Chicago.

Donna, tell us a about the Zhou B Art Center and what some of your job responsibilities are. The Zhou Brothers honored me with the task of creatively developing the mission of the center and spreading the word. In the last year as the Vice President of Creative Development I have handled a number of high profile projects.

Governor Pat Quinn proclaimed October 16, 2014 Zhou Brothers Day in Illinois. The Zhou Brothers have made considerable cultural and economic impact on their adopted neighborhood of Bridgeport. The Zhou B Art Center has been their Journey of Dreams.

To celebrate 10 Years of Art Innovation we produced three events to commemorate these steps in the Zhou Brothers' dream. The Zhou B Gala was introduced by our celebrity emcees Art Norman and Linda Yu. Guests were then invited to enter the Spirit Space for an exclusive first view of the Feeling is Liberty exhibit. During the Gala on the 2nd Floor Theresa Mah handed the proclamation from Governor Quinn.

My job includes the Public Relations and Marketing. With full pages in both *Michigan Avenue*, *CS Magazine* and an interview with Judy Hsu on the morning news we

were off to a great start. The center and Zhou Brothers have been featured in *Travel and Leisure*, *Chicago Magazine*, *the Chicagoist*, *Chicago Gallery News*, *Mandarin Quarterly* and many more. It has been my pleasure to celebrate the Zhou Brothers vision of having a creative paradise for artists and those who love their expressions, in many diverse forms.

I understand the Zhou B Art Center was once the Spiegel Catalog administration building. Talk to us a little about the different studios and events at the Zhou. In 2003 DaHuang and Shan Zuo Zhou purchased a run-down 85,000 sq ft former Spiegel Catalog Warehouse building with the intent of creating a creative paradise for emerging artists.

Their own art career had achieved their goal of collaborating on each of their masterworks and exhibiting in major cities around the world. The Zhou Brothers goal was to give back by creating in their words an "artists playground". At the same time the Zhou B Art Center has transformed the humble neighborhood of Bridgeport into a mecca for art and culture.

The center started as the vision of the Zhou Brothers, but has taken on a life of it's own. The First Floor was established

as the Zhou Brothers Museum, with a permanent collection of impressive sculpture. An annual preview of a new and previously unseen Zhou Brothers series of work creates palpable excitement among collectors and art lovers. The Second Floor Gallery, each month presents a new exhibit of wildly diverse artists and stylistic approaches including everything from innovative new media to the highly detailed portraits of the new realists.

Experience art up close and personal at the 3rd Friday celebrations. Each month brings together the vibrant energy of the over 60 in-resident artists who open their studios for the increasing number visitors to explore and see working artist space and exchange a glass of wine and cultural conversations. *CenterLine Cafe* is the central gathering spot for the enthusiastic visitors, often numbering over 900, who regularly flock to the center for the exciting evening of art spread out over 5 floors. The many partners of the center include the Civic Orchestra who perform an eclectic repertoire of music, Kenmare Catering who presents edible art and Genesis Art Supply with a live painting performance, to name a few.

The center often opens it's doors to host unique special events. The blank canvas of 12 ft ceilings, white walls and large win-

DONNA BLISS

ZHOU B ART CENTER



dows bathing the space in natural light make this a highly sought after event venue.

Have you seen any changes in the neighborhood since the Art Center opened up? In 1986 the Zhou Brothers made their decision to emigrate to the United States, the Southside's Bridgeport became their adopted home. With their unique partnership, collaborating on large canvases where their sensibilities melded into a cohesive whole, they had become rising stars in China. But, even as the Zhou Brothers career has catapulted them to success around the world, they have anchored themselves in the Bridgeport neighborhood. They live and work in a former Polish social club, nicknamed the "Bucket of Blood", which houses the light filled studio where they create their masterwork. Two blocks away, the Zhou B Art Center, a sprawling complex of galleries, artist studios and event space established by the brothers in 2004, celebrates the 11th anniversary in October 16, 2015.

In a statement, Cook County Board Commissioner John P. Daley (11th District), spoke to the impact the Zhou B Art Center has had on the community: "Since opening their Art Center ten years ago, The Zhou Brothers have helped transform Bridgeport into a neighborhood well known for a re-

newed appreciation of the arts. The Zhou Brothers are dedicated not only to the arts, but to the community. We will be forever grateful for all they have done."

The Journey to make this dream possible was a twisted road, full of challenges and obstacles. They never wavered in their desire to bring this vision to life. The Journey of Dreams book chronicles the steps along the way. In 2003 the brothers resurrected an abandoned and neglected Spiegel Catalog Warehouse building and refurbished it to the polished gem the center is today.

The Zhou Brothers are pioneers of culture to Bridgeport. They were the first artists in the area, now there are 13 art galleries including the Bridgeport Art Center down the street on 35th. The city of Chicago is getting behind image improvement of Bridgeport, renovating the 5 block stretch of Morgan from 31st to 35th Street. Ald. James Balcer (11th) said the city is using tax increment financing money to pay for the streetscaping project, which will include new street paving, sidewalks, decorative pavers, bike racks, pedestrian safety signs, trash bins and more.

"They're getting the whole thing," he said. The work, which also includes a major sewer upgrade, is expected to begin in the

spring, Balcer said. Online records show the work is projected to cost \$4.3 million, with the money coming from the 35th and Halsted TIF district, but Balcer said the work will cost about \$3 million.

When asked about the milestone 10th anniversary of the Zhou B Art Center the Zhou Brothers stated, "During this moment of celebration we are beginning another great vision and fantasy: The Zhou B Art Center is developing in the thriving capital of China, Beijing. In the future Chicago and Beijing will have a close alliance through the Zhou B Art Center providing the greatest platform for international artists."

Tell us what the next year holds for the Zhou. The Zhou Brothers are working with their contacts in China to develop the Zhou Brothers Museum, Beijing, China. Details will be shared as we get closer to the opening of that cultural landmark. The Brothers have been working on a new series of work for the museum in China. In addition, a new series will be premiered on October 16th for the Anniversary celebration.

Photo above of Donna Bliss with Sergio Gomez at Zhou B Art Center, Chicago.



What social issue do you care most about and how do you express that in your art? I've always been an advocate for equal opportunity. Whether or not some of us see this, there are social structures today that marginalize, exclude, and prevent artists (especially those who aren't well represented or aren't a part of an hierarchical academic institution) from being able to seriously contribute to the history of art. I've painted this 16-foot painting called "A Requiem for the Outsiders" as a response to these cultural and political tensions. In addition to diversification projects spearheaded by local non-profit art organizations around the country, I really appreciate the huge efforts of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the Nevada Arts Council (NAC) in support of a variety of programs that directly help independent individual artists mitigate these sort of problems.

On a personal level, who is your biggest supporter? My biggest supporter is my wife. I see her as a partner in art. If you're married like me, you'll realize that being an artist is a partnership, a decision that we have to make every time we get up in the morning before I start painting again, all day, everyday, no vacations. It's one of the toughest jobs in the world, spending so much time making things that do not immediately translate to a fiduciary value in the community. Everyday is a temptation to find another job whose value is readily quantified in financial currency.

Are you getting tired of nudes? I am tired of nudes in their current state, nudes for the sake of painting nudes. I think we've seen enough anatomy, fine arts or not, but it doesn't mean nudes are over. I recently finished "The Folly of Rockwell's Left", a 96" x 48" piece of nude baseball players with their pe-

nises exposed, coincidentally similar to the 19th Century "naked baseball players" mural by artist Frederick C. Martin at the Library of Congress Great Hall. It surprises me, in this day and age, that some people were offended or shocked by my male nude painting. I find it interesting that it could just be the context or the changing views of contemporary culture seeing the male sexual organ as obtrusive to our senses. It surely feels like a cultural regression, it's not very clear to me but I decided it was worth investigating.

What are your thoughts about the current art scene? It feels like a stock market with junk bonds floating everywhere waiting for its next victim. I see an art scene that has been orchestrated by a capitalist and academic infrastructure, squeezing a submissive individual into a mold labeled and certified as "artist". It certainly feels like a dicta-

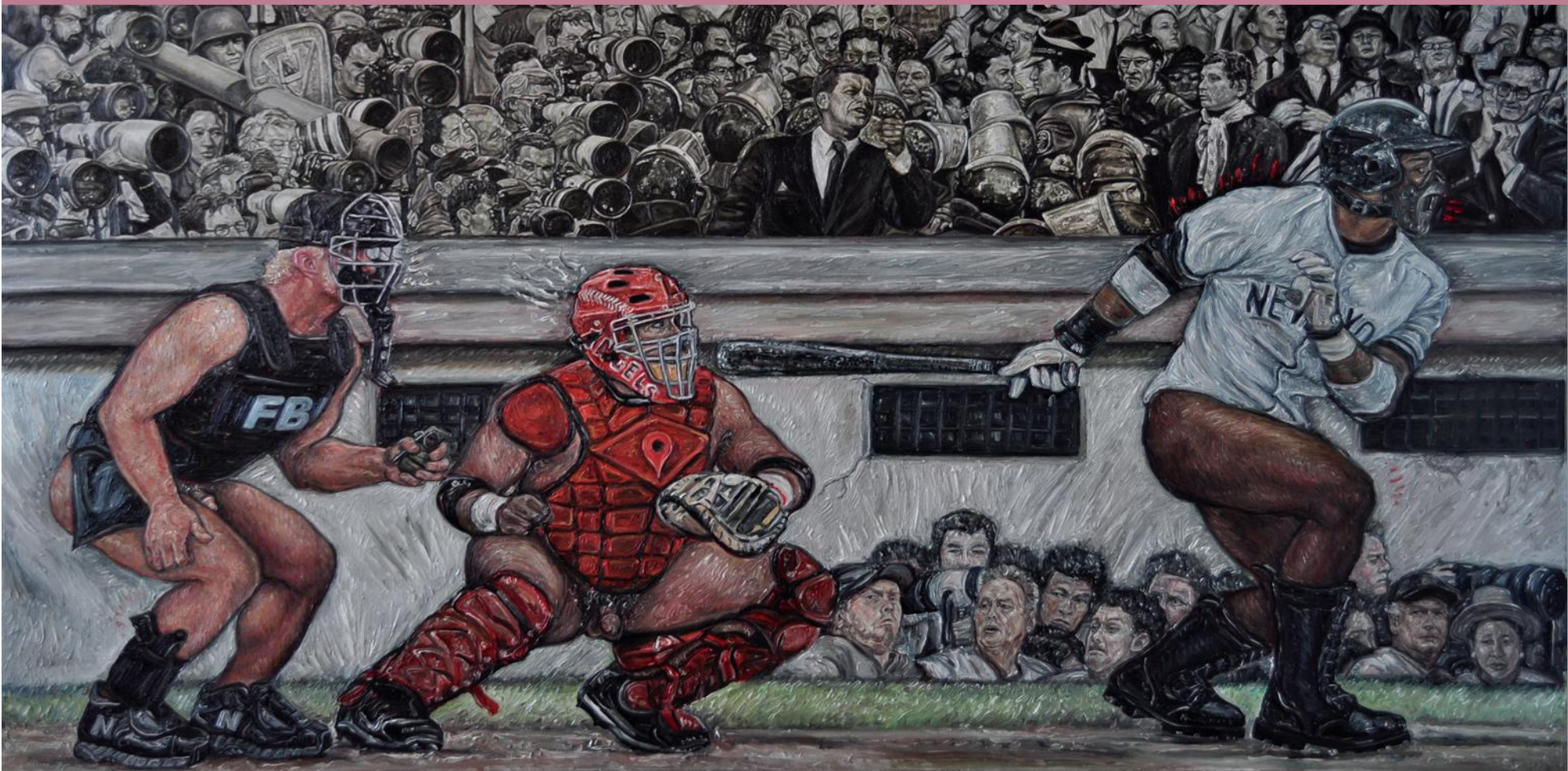


torship art scene today, a “Foucauldian Seat” of control in any micro or macro perspective from the grassroots to the global scene. The result is an aberrant foundational influence that has trickled down throughout its pyramidal structure into the marginalized artist and his (or her) works. What would be the point in anyone wishing to be willfully beguiled by anything insincere as long as it is radically new? I think people have this false but trendy notion that fashion can be art and art can be fashion. Maybe what we need is a sort of cultural contingency that’s more open to change, to teach the next generation to be more accepting of a “vacancy” of control. It’s time for artists and their patrons today to unlearn things that they think they’ve already known and start afresh. Or maybe we just need to paint better. We’re all in the same boat anyway, but it seems like a hopeless task if you ask me.

Do you collect art yourself and if so, what artwork do you collect? No, personally I do not collect art. I grew up in a home which was also my mom’s gallery downstairs and my dad’s studio upstairs. At one point, my mother collected so much art including old masters. But when times were financially hard, either she couldn’t let go to sell them or there weren’t any collectors making serious offers. I don’t blame her though, art has always been a tough sell. I went around with my mom all over the place to offer and sell art, it’s what I did for years to help pay for the bills. Those memories still haunt me. I wouldn’t want to even collect my own works, I’d rather see them all gone and hanging on other people’s walls.

How often do you stretch outside of your comfort zone? Always, every chance I get. A famous art critic always said, “Paint the future! Change the

world!”. How else are we supposed to do that if we’re all content with what we have and keep coming up with iterations of the same “safe stuff” over and over? I think the greatest achievement of an artist is to create a work of art that defies expectations, connects with its viewer and speaks for itself loudly and clearly without the need for explanation. Unfortunately, in this digital age, it isn’t enough anymore to be just a producer of art. I believe art is an epiphany, a struggle to keep up and urgently respond to a rapidly evolving contemporary culture. Artists today must be able to see the bigger picture that involves the self and the relationship with its immediate family and social life, that becomes the ultimate performance of his (or her) career. It all has to be the real deal in its entirety or people will eventually see right through it.





Top Page
Corrupting the Range
 oil on panel
 9x6

Left Page Top
Bridge the Gap
 oil on canvas
 96x72

Left Page Bottom
The Folly of Rockwell's Left
 oil on canvas
 96x48

Liberace Right
Almost Flamingo
 oil on canvas
 16x16

Header on Interview Page
A Requiem for the Outsiders
 oil on canvas
 192x72

Liberace Next Page
Open City
 oil on canvas
 16x16

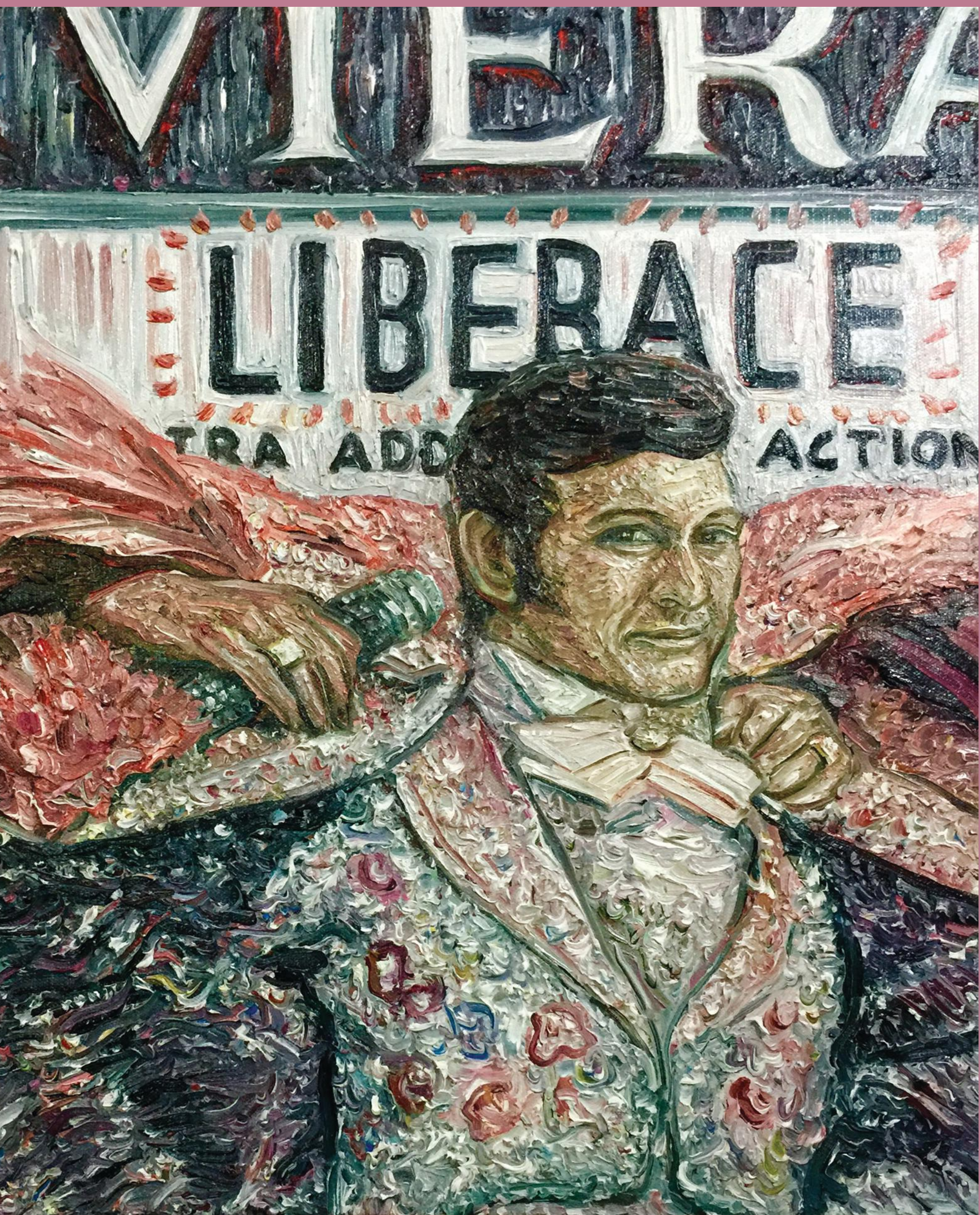




Gig Depio is a painter and an advocate for public art in Las Vegas, Nevada. He was recently awarded the 2016 Fellowship Grant by the Nevada Arts Council (NAC), and has worked with Clark County Winchester Cultural Center Gallery, the City of Las Vegas Galleries, and recently had a solo exhibition curated by Dr. Robert Tracy at the UNLV Hayes and Healy Gallery in February 2015. Depio has also participated and volunteered at non-profit organizations like the Guerrilla Kage at the 18b Arts District, Tiagon Filipino Artists Group, the Las Vegas Quorum Artists Group, the Las Vegas Arts Guild, Blackbird Studios, and the 2014 Annual Juried show at the Las Vegas Contemporary Arts Center (CAC). Depio graduated from Ateneo de Manila University in the Philippines, and worked for several years as an apprentice to his father, Prof. Gig C. De Pio, Sr.

Depio's body of work has always been about large-scale paintings involving people of the community, its history and its challenges, and a vision through which they can see the world differently. He believes that it is an artist's obligation to give, that an artist must pay it forward to the community by striving to make great art — a heroic gesture from the humility of labor through which large and difficult things inspire people to work together to live better lives in their own communities.





ART JOYCE POLANCE



Joyce Polance's paintings explore gender and relationships. She attended Wesleyan University and received a BFA from F.I.T. in New York. She has been awarded six CAAP Grants from the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs, a Cliff Dwellers' Artist in Residence Award, two Judith Dawn Memorial Fund grants and a George Sugarman Foundation Grant. Her work has been featured in multiple publications both in the U.S. and abroad. Polance's paintings are held internationally in private and corporate collections. She has exhibited widely and is represented by Judith Ferrara Gallery in Three Oaks, Michigan. Her paintings can be viewed at www.joycepolance.com. Photo by Nadine Robbins, Zhou B Art Center, April 16, 2015.

Who is your favorite living artist and why? For years, it was Jenny Saville. I've always been blown away by her boldness and use of color. She may be the most talented living artist. That said, I respond less to her recent work, probably because I am changing in my own, moving away from that direction. I don't have one favorite at the moment, but there's a Russian artist named Aleck Chekini whose work I really love.

Are you getting tired of nudes? No. I think the body is one of the most interesting and challenging things to paint. I have been branching out into other subjects of late, but I think the nude will always be there.

What are your thoughts about the current art scene? I think, like most areas in the arts, there are a lucky few (not necessarily related to talent but sometimes very much so) who do extremely well, and most of the rest plug away at it. I'm not enamored with conceptual work in general, and that does seem to be what gets the bulk of attention these days, and I hope that will shift back. I realized a long time ago that the art world is fickle and highly subjective, and it's as often about whom you know as much as what you do. So I have to make art for myself. If people want it, that's a very nice bonus.

How often do you stretch outside of your comfort zone? I go through phases.

The last 2 years, I've been pushing myself constantly, and my work has become very different from the large, realistic nudes I'd been doing for the last 6 years prior to that shift.

Is painting dead? No. There are tons of wonderful painters out there; they're not all well-known, but they don't matter any less. Even if paintings aren't as ground-breaking as they once were, and that's subjective anyway, how can creativity and passionate artistic expression ever be considered meaningless? How can capturing human emotion or imagination ever be dated? If I see a painting that moves me, I never care if it isn't conceptually new. I care that I am moved.



Curtain 2015
oil on canvas
28 x 22



**ZHOU B ART CENTER
CHICAGO
APRIL 15, 2016**

Freak OUT! is an exhibition of the arts expressing the boldness, liberation, individuality, coming of age and decadence of the Disco era. The works will include visual arts in various mediums and styles including poetry, video, sculpture, performance and we are leaving the floor open for impromptus.

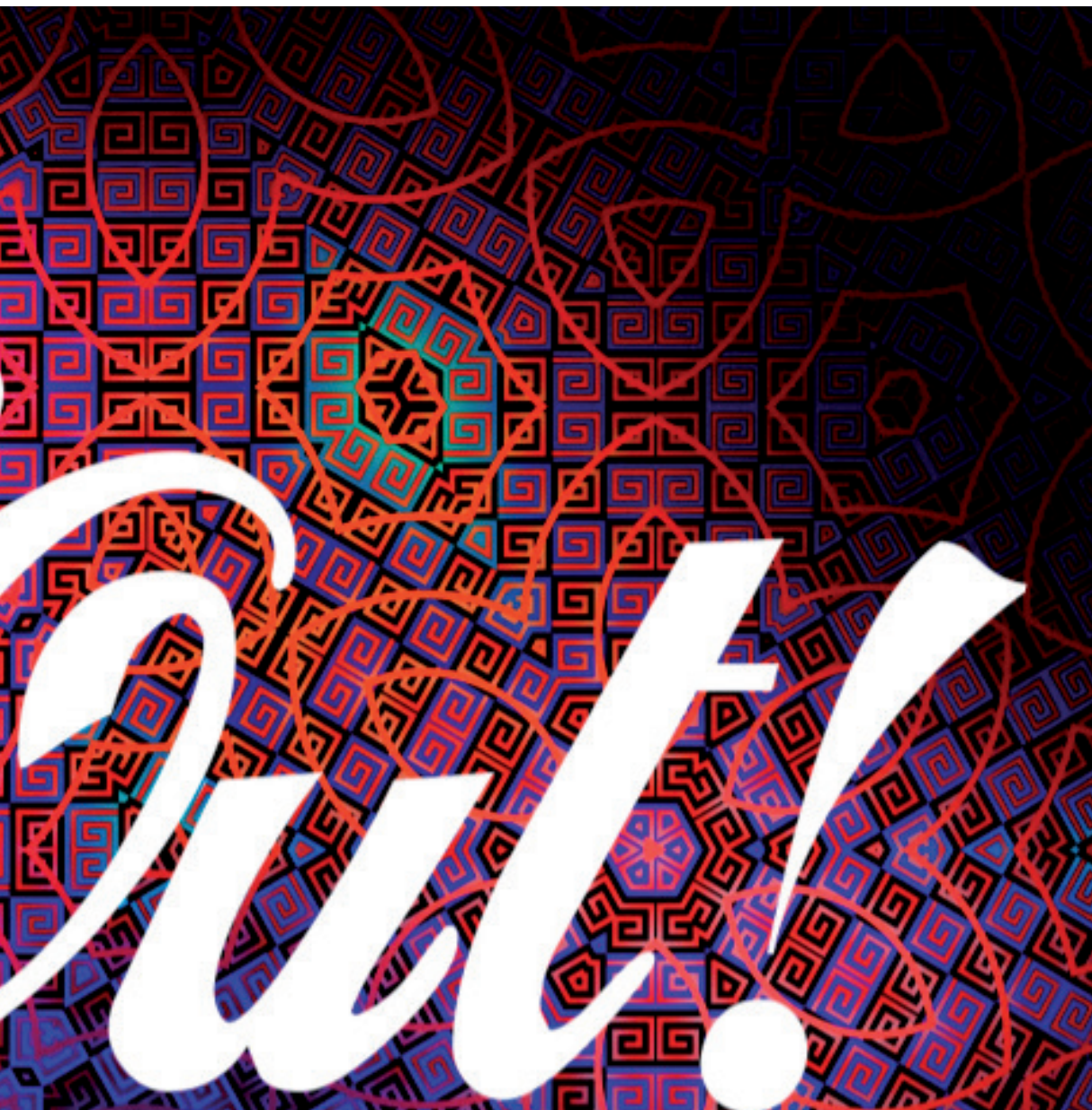
Denis Peterson (Painting)
Dirk Dzimirsky (Painting)
Micahel Van Zeyl (Painting)
Pamela Wilson (Drawing/Painting)
Kip Omolade (Sculpture/Painting)
Cesar Santos (Painting)
Michelle Doll (Painting)
Reuben Negrón (Painting)
Matthew Cherry (Painting)
Nick Ward (Painting)
Diego Quiros (Photography)
Angela Hardy (Painting)
Jennifer Moore (Photography)
Nadine Robbins (Painting)
Jeff Bess (Painting)
Ron Androla (Poet)
Nin Andrews (Poet)
Cesar Conde (Painting)
Jaime Valero (Painting)
Victoria Selbach (Painting)
Daniel Maidman (Painting)
Dana Title (Painting)
Bobby Lucy (Painting)
Pauline Aubey (Drawing)

Erica Elan Ciganek (Painting)
Elizabeth Claire (Painting)
Geraldine Rodriguez (Photography)
Matthew Hlttinger (Poet)
Geoffrey Gatza (Poet)
Carlton Fisher (Poet)
Kemel Zaldivar (Poet)
Joshua Gray (Poet)
Suzy Smith (Painting)
Emma Trelles (Poet)
Jan Brandt (Craft)
Sharon Pomales (Painting)
Natalie Roseman (Painting)
Adam Holzrichter (Painting)
Mike Selbach (Sculpture)
Debra Balchen (Sculpture)
Lacey Lewis (Painting)
Melinda Whitmore (Sculpture)
Christopher Slaymaker (Painting)
John Walker (Painting)
Jeff Filipski (Painting)
John Korn (Video)
Sonne Hernandez (Painting)
Steven Da Luz (Painting)

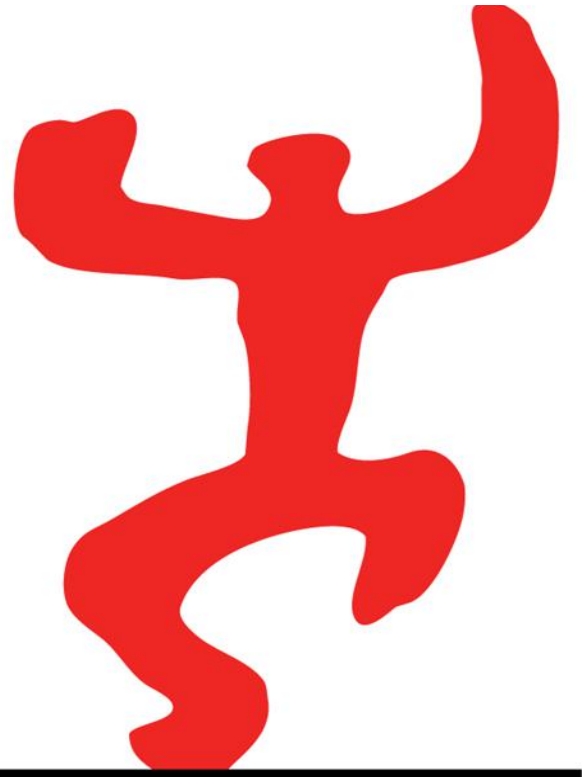
Ruben Quesada (Poetry)
Patrick Earl Hammie (Painting)
Debra Livingston (Craft/Sculpture)
Pris Campbell (Poetry)
Francien Krieg (Painting)
Adrian Cox (Painting)
Ricardo Pau-Llosa (Poetry)
Stephen Mills (Poetry)
Dorielle Caimi (Painting)
Bryce Ramming (Performance)
Rachel Moseley (Painting)

Disco Girls! Miniature works

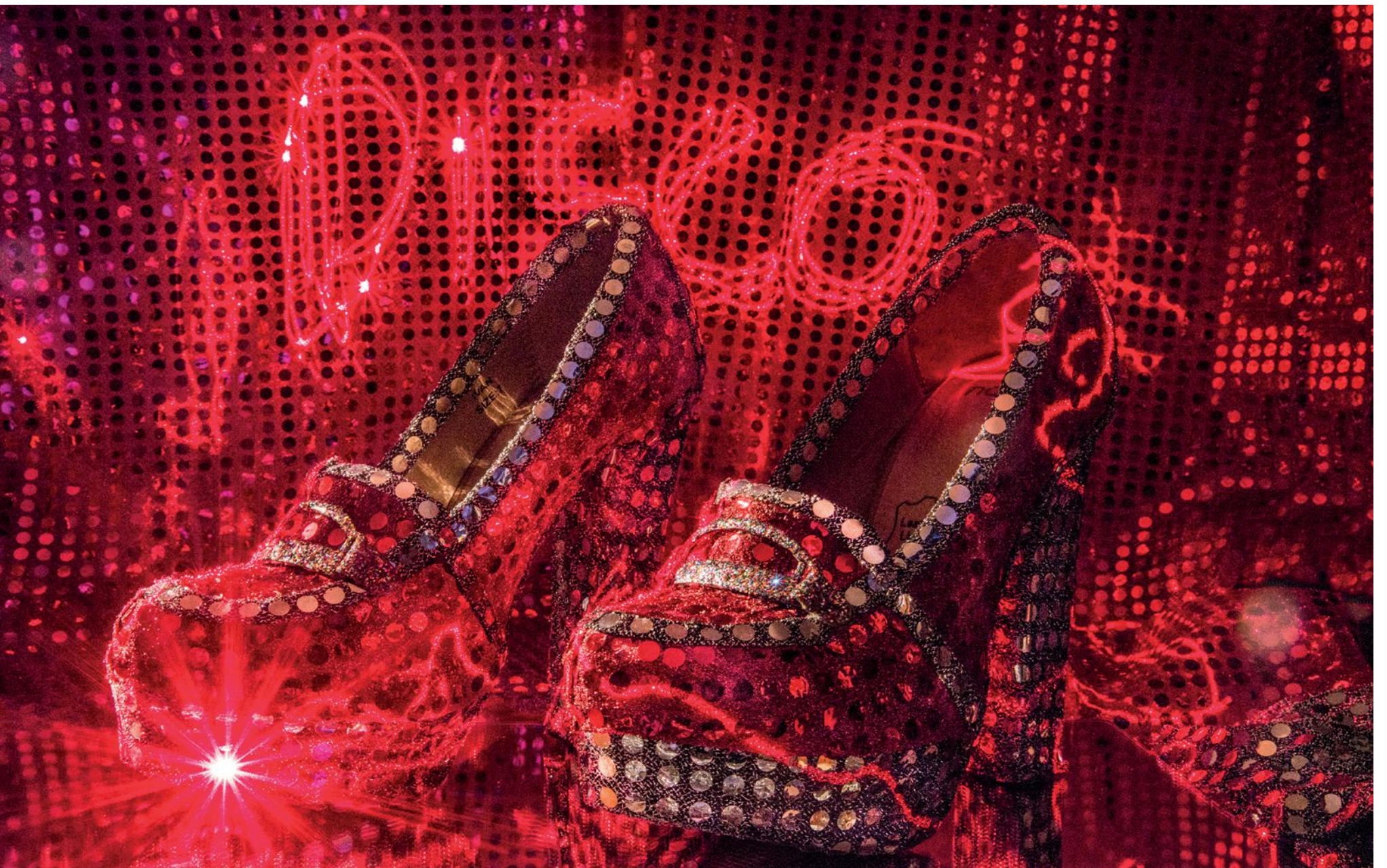
Joyce Polance
Omalix
Erica Elan Ciganek
Martin Easley
JM Culver
Jef Tonnelli
Sarah Nordmark
Tanja Gant
Mary Jones Easley



*i***ART***istas*



ZHOU B
ART CENTER



Has the Art Market Gone Medieval?

On the 26th of March, several news sources reported that casino magnate Steve Wynn had sold Picasso's 1932 painting "Le Rêve" to hedge fund owner Steven Cohen for \$155 million dollars. Mr. Cohen apparently felt like doing some art shopping and image burnishing after having paid a fine of \$614 million to settle accusations of insider trading without any admission of guilt. Cohen had been coveting "Le Rêve" for some time, but a previous sale agreement had fallen through after Steve Wynn, who suffers from the degenerative eye disease retinitis pigmentosa, accidentally tore a small hole in the work with his elbow in 2006.

Mr. Wynn, who has a reputation as boss who treats his employees generously, said something quite remarkable a few hours after the painting was damaged:

"My feeling was, it's a picture, it's my picture, we'll fix it. Nobody got sick or died."

Those seem like the words of a man who values people more than he values art. His sentiments - if sincere - mark him as exceptional in an era when blue chip works of art are commanding stratospheric prices that serve as reminders of economic inequality. He is right that even an especially fine Picasso is just a picture.

Just what can you say about a society in which a picture is worth so much when so many are facing poverty? It boggles my mind that one of the four existing versions of Edvard Munch's painting "The Scream" sold in 2012 for \$119.9 million. Such a vast sum of money could do so much to relieve suffering, but instead it was spent on a painting of suffering. As the prices of famous works of art rise, are we in some way going backwards in history?

There is something Medieval about the collecting habits of today's super-rich. It goes without saying that the rich have always been the most avid collectors of art, but frenzy at the top of the current art market that suggests that today's collectors are motivated less by the aesthetic value of their purchases than they are by a kind of religious fervor and supernatural faith in the transformative power of their purchases.

Blue chip works of art are now being bought and sold as relics.

Relics were bits and pieces of items that were directly connected to saints and their miraculous lives. During the medieval period splinters from the alleged true cross, finger bones of St. John the Baptist, and even alleged bits of Christ's foreskin — the

Holy Prepuce — were avidly collected. Huge prices were paid, especially around the time of the crusades, and the market for relics was flooded with fakes. The situation got so bad that in 1287 the pope was given final authority in disputes over the authenticity of relics.

Owning a relic made Medieval collectors feel directly connected to the much venerated saints of the period. Relics also served as guarantees of political prestige and spiritual authority. Encased in lavish gem-encrusted containers known as reliquaries, relics made their owners feel holier-than-thou regardless of their actual piety. Relics also were — and still are — major attractions for cathedrals, drawing visiting pilgrims by the score and stimulating local economies through tourism. Opposition to the cult of relics was most often treated as heresy.

As you can see, it isn't too hard to draw some comparisons between the way relics were collected and displayed and the way high end art is collected and displayed. Famous artists — living and dead — achieve the status of "saints" and collectors transcend their sins by acquiring and displaying physical manifestations of miraculous creativity. Art museums are cathedrals, curators are priests and museum visitors are pilgrims seeking contact with the supernatural in the physical form of works of art.

If it strikes you that my comparison is a bit facile, keep in mind that works of art really should be appreciated in a very different way than relics. Works of art are meant to use aesthetic means to move us, speak to us, and to inspire us. Great works of art appeal to our senses and to our intellects.

The finest works of art can speak directly to you in a transcendent language, and the dialogue you can have with them benefits from education and maturity. In other words, great works of art say the most to those who take them in with the greatest receptivity and consideration. There is a reason that works made during and after the Italian Renaissance appeal to us in different ways than Medieval works of art: they come from a tradition that was opened up and enriched by Humanist thinking and the rich philosophical and mythical content of Greco-Roman civilization.

Relics appeal to something else: our need to project piety and to advertise our connection to those who apparently have or had extraordinary powers. Relics can serve the wealthy as a way of cleansing their reputations and deflecting criticism of their actual deeds and actions. It doesn't require education to appreciate a relic: their holi-

ness doesn't require aesthetic appreciation which is replaced by superstition and a humble sense of awe. All you have to do to get the full effect of a relic is to be in its presence.

One more thing about relics: although they were often displayed beautifully, relics themselves are not beautiful because they didn't have to be. Finger bones, bits of skull, and scraps of holy shrouds generally aren't much to look at. Neither are the innumerable giclée prints of Thomas Kinkadee, but his "DNA Matrix™" was added to the mechanical signatures on his works to give his works the vibe of relics. Unfortunately, the observation that cult followings can boost the price of works of art isn't just a feature of the Kinkadee market.

Thirty years ago when I briefly worked for art dealer Larry Gagosian — who was a young dealer just starting his career — one of his clients said something to me that I have never forgotten. "Larry," he commented, "doesn't have a great eye for art. He has a great ear for art." I have thought about that remark for a long time. The way I have come to understand it is to acknowledge that it wasn't necessary for an aspiring art dealer to have a keen visual or aesthetic sense. What mattered was an "ear" for names and market trends.

Collectors all around the world want "names" because fame sells and because works by famous artists seem to keep their value in an increasingly superstitious and brand-conscious culture. Interestingly, as the super-rich around the globe pay vast sums for works by the art world's saints, artist's foundations and estates are scrambling to get out of the business of authenticating works: both the Basquiat and Warhol estate have ceased giving authentications due to an excess of contentious lawsuits. Perhaps the new Pope could step in and help.

I want to make it clear that when the market treats great works of art as "relics" they may still be great works of art. I have a high regard for the works of Picasso, Rothko, Bacon and others whose works have recently brought supernatural prices. What concerns me is that their works — as Steven Wynn would point out — are just pictures, not people. Mr. Wynn's Picasso was apparently pretty easy for a good conservator to patch up: human beings aren't nearly so easy to fix.

Note: Originally published 2014 *10 Rather Eccentric Essays About Art* by John Seed
Available from Amazon and other bookstores.